

Places to Gather, Play, and Learn



Above: Bode Recreation Center in Highland Park.

The vision created by the Highlands Community Alliance represents the future for Southeast San Antonio. It is the culmination of hard work, good ideas, and a blueprint for the community to embrace. Not it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work.”

Mark Carmona, Highlands resident

The Highlands planning area has several community focal points. Highland Park’s neighborhood park includes the Bode Recreation Center. The 600 acre Southside Lions Park, on the edge of the planning area, is part of three neighborhoods. The Highland Hills neighborhood and many area residents use the community center, swimming pool, picnic tables, pavilions, pond and open space at this large park. Residents of the Southeast Highland Hills

Good Neighbor Crime Watch area congregate in their neighborhood’s Pickwell Park.

Six elementary schools, one middle school, and several parochial schools are located in the planning area with Highlands High School just outside the planning boundary.

A branch library is located in the planning area as well as the Bob Billa Learning Center, and a University Health clinic. Southeast Baptist Hospital is

situated just outside the planning area.

Numerous churches are located in the planning area, including two large Catholic parishes with schools and recreation facilities.

In this chapter, the goals, objectives and action steps developed by the community address concerns about youth and elderly programs, pocket parks, park amenities, expanded recycling programs, the availability comprehensive healthcare, and ex-

Goal 7: Community Facilities and Programs

Address unmet needs for community programs and facilities for residents of all ages.

Objective 7.1 Community Facilities

Acquire and/or enhance recreational and educational facilities for community residents of all ages.

ACTION STEPS:

7.1.1 Conduct a community survey to identify unmet facility needs in order to better focus efforts.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: YMCA, Planning Department., UTSA Institute for Economic Development, local businesses, chambers of commerce (see 1.1.1), churches

Funding Sources: Neighborhood Association dues, business donations, City Council discretionary funds, Bexar County, McCreless Mall, Friends of McCreless Library



Vacant buildings, such as the Albertson store on Southcross are possible locations for community services.

7.1.2 Work with the YMCA to obtain a facility that caters to all ages with playgrounds (modern, covered equipment), basketball courts, tennis courts, swimming pool, community center, exercise facilities, etc.

- Meet with YMCA to determine feasibility.
- Identify a central place for the facility by consulting the inventory of underused land. (See Action Step 1.2.3)
- Explore possible funding sources.

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: YMCA

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, property owners, human service providers, real estate agencies

Funding Sources: YMCA, private donations, private foundations, United Way

7.1.3 Work with COSA Parks and Recreation Department and other organizations to establish teen/senior centers and more public pools with expanded summer hours. Centers with computer labs, skate-parks, and exercise facilities are needed.



Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: COSA Parks and Recreation Department

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, City Councilperson, youth serving organizations, literacy groups, private business, churches, Parks Foundation

Funding Sources: Parks Foundation, bond issues, COSA capital improvement funds, CDBG funds

A father and son play basketball in Pickwell Park.

7.1.4 Advocate for school improvements, expansions and/or additions that enhance student educational quality and/or safety.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: SAISD, ECISD, private schools

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, PTAs, PTOs, school boards, Region 20, COSA Office of Cultural Affairs

Funding Sources: bond funds, donations, tuition, expanded scholarships, grants from state/federal agencies

7.1.5 Pursue opportunities to establish a senior citizen center in a central location.

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: COSA Department of Community Initiatives Eldercare and Parks and Recreation Department

Partnerships: Texas Department on Aging, Sisters Care, Christian Senior Services, Southeast Community Outreach for Older People (SCOOP), churches

Funding Sources: City Council discretionary funds, fund raisers, private foundations, private donations

Objective 7.2 Community Programs for All Ages

Develop and/or enhance recreational and educational programs for community residents of all ages. If possible, combine with facilities survey.

ACTION STEPS:

7.2.1 Conduct a survey of the community to identify unmet programmatic needs in order to better focus efforts.



Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance

Partnerships: YMCA, churches, literacy centers, COSA Department of Community Initiatives, Planning Department, Health Department, University Health System, Friends of McCreless Library

Funding Sources: neighborhood associations, grant, local businesses, churches

Computer class.

7.2.2 Work with neighborhood volunteers, area churches and non-profit groups to develop and administer additional youth and elderly citizen programs such as:

- A “drop-in center” to provide home-like atmosphere for juveniles.
- Work programs for juveniles and after-school challenge programs for younger children.
- A “Neighbor to Neighbor” campaign to match elderly residents with a neighbor to ensure that every elderly person is contacted daily and is not isolated.
- Childcare training for new and young parents to help teen parents develop life skills and community contacts.
- Senior citizens involvement in youth programs such as after school homework help and teacher’s aides in schools.
- Solicit local corporations to sponsor at-risk youth so they can participate in youth programs.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: McCreless Library, learning centers, Southeast Community Outreach for Older People (SCOOP), Christian Youth Organization (CYO), SAISD, COSA Department of Community Initiatives, COSA Office of Cultural Affairs, HEB, COSA Parks and Recreation Department, YMCA, Epworth Church, PTA’s, Councilperson, neighborhood volunteers, churches

Funding Sources: State, Federal, private foundations, United Way, COSA general fund

7.2.3 Encourage youth involvement in sports such as baseball, basketball, soccer, etc. and with organizations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts by offering and promoting these activities in schools.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: SAISD, ECISD

Partnerships: YMCA, Christian Youth Organization (CYO), churches, COSA Parks and Recreation Department, youth serving organizations

Funding sources: fees, donations, scholarships from professional athletic organizations, sporting goods stores, private exercise facilities

7.2.4 Work with the San Antonio School District, City representatives, and other agencies to establish a regular neighborhood youth event (sporting event, concert, festival, District 3 Olympics, etc.).

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: Christian Youth Organization (CYO), youth serving agencies, SA Missions baseball, Palo Alto College, COSA Office of Cultural Affairs, COSA Parks and Recreation Department, City Council, SAISD, YMCA, churches

Funding Sources: corporations, in-kind donations from businesses, individual donations, entry fees/donations at gate



Spring social event.

Goal 8: Parks and Environment

Improve the environmental health of the area by enhancing parks and open space while addressing sustainability issues related to energy and recycling.

Objective 8.1 Parks and Natural Areas

Promote increased usage of community parks and natural areas through physical improvement of existing spaces and acquisition of new ones.

ACTION STEPS:

8.1.1 Facilitate the creation of a Highlands Area Parks and Recreation Master Plan, with particular emphasis on Southside Lions Park and Salado Creek. The plan will address:

- Passive facilities including natural areas with bicycle paths, walking paths and nature trails along Salado Creek.
- Underused space in Southside Lions Park to develop trails and facilities for picnics and community activities.



Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: COSA Parks and Recreation Department

Partnerships: Planning Department, Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Texas Forest Service

Funding Sources: COSA Parks and Recreation, City Council

Unused land in Southside Lions Park.

8.1.2 Encourage and facilitate more activity in Pickwell Park by:

- Installing attractive entry signage and constructing a gazebo.
- Enforcing leash laws.
- Expanding the park area.

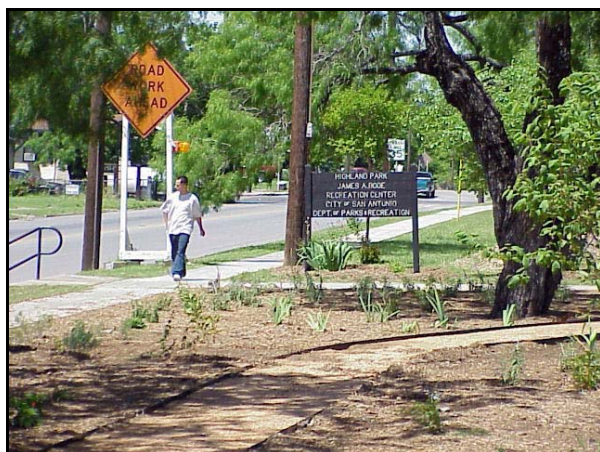
Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) to long (over 5 years)

Lead Partner: COSA Parks and Recreation

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, COSA Planning Department, COSA Office of Cultural Affairs

Funding Sources: Planning Department's Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program, Office of Cultural Affairs arts in the community program, fundraising, personal donations, bond funds

8.1.3 Encourage neighborhood groups to pursue beautification grants to improve parks (e.g. Highland Park xeriscape project).



Highland Park xeriscape.

8.1.4 Establish additional green spaces, pocket parks and gathering places throughout the community whenever possible.



Example of a small park in San Antonio.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: SAISD, ECISD, private schools, churches, COSA Planning Department, SAWS, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, nurseries, SA Trees

Funding Sources: SAWS, COSA Planning Department, SA Trees, Nurseries (Fanick's)

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: businesses, COSA Parks and Recreation Department, fraternal and service organizations, Highlands High School Horticultural Program, Planning Department

Funding Sources: Private donations, business landscape requirements, neighborhood associations, fund-raising, COSA Planning Department Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program

Objective 8.2 Sustainability and the Environment

Work to address sustainability issues within the community such as recycling and alternative energy sources.

ACTION STEPS:

8.2.1 Advocate for the use of solar energy and other conservation technology in private as well as public buildings.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: Solar SA, SAWS, elected officials, CPS Environmental Division, Sierra Club Alamo Chapter, Sustainable Building Coalition, Green Party

Funding Sources: Volunteers, Solar SA, COSA, fundraising, Habitat for Humanity

8.2.2 Support existing community recycling programs through publicity/adult education campaigns and by partnering with schools to educate children on environmental and sustainability issues.

- Work with the media to promote conservation and sustainable practices.
- Develop a media piece that follows a discarded item from the time it leaves the house until it goes into the ground or is recycled.
- Look for or develop educational programs that demonstrate the benefits of trees, fresh air, xeriscaping, etc.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance

Proposed Partnerships: Media, Green Party, Sustainable Building Coalition, Sierra Club Alamo Chapter, Texas Forest Service, Solar SA, Keep San Antonio Beautiful, COSA Environmental Services Department

Proposed Funding Sources: School Districts, volunteers, Solar SA, COSA, Texas Forest Service Urban Forestry Partnership Grant Program, fundraising



Recycling.

8.2.3 Coordinate with the City, SAWS, CPS, other agencies, and the private sector to improve current recycling practices.

- Investigate the feasibility of specialized recycle bins of different sizes to increase usage.
- Bring recycling service to apartment complexes.
- Work with the City to develop an incentive program for recycling. ("Pay As You Throw")
- Form partnerships with companies that use copper, plastic, paper or other recyclables to create destinations for waste.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: COSA Environmental Services Department, SAWS, CPS, environmental organizations, individual companies

Funding Sources: individual companies, SAWS, CPS, COSA

Goal 9: Community Health and Wellness

Improve the availability of comprehensive, quality healthcare in the southeast part of San Antonio.

Objective 9.1 Hospital Facilities

Support Southeast Baptist Hospital's development as a comprehensive medical center to meet the community's needs.

ACTION STEPS:

9.1.1 Poll the Highlands community about how they would like to see SE Baptist Hospital grow and what will be needed for it to be successful. (Include questions regarding hospital in previously mentioned community survey.)

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: COSA Health Department, University Health System, SE Baptist Hospital, businesses, churches

Funding Sources: SE Baptist Hospital, Neighborhood Association dues, business donations, City Council discretionary funds, Bexar County, churches

9.1.2 Promote the expansion/rebuilding of SE Baptist Hospital as a major health facility with specialists in most disciplines and services for total care such as complete laboratory and x-ray facilities.

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: SE Baptist Hospital

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance

Funding sources: Baptist Health System

9.1.3 Encourage coverage by television, radio and the newspapers of the importance of the SE Baptist Hospital to the community.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations

Partnerships: SA Express News, Southside Reporter, radio

Funding sources: No cost

9.1.4 Encourage SE Baptist Hospital to hold a yearly health fair.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: SE Baptist Hospital

Partnerships: COSA Health Department, medical vendors, health providers, University Health System

Funding sources: Baptist and University Health Systems, COSA, drug companies

Objective 9.2 Health and Wellness Services

Increase awareness, accessibility and availability of health and wellness services in the Highlands area.

ACTION STEPS:

9.2.1 Educate the community about San Antonio Metropolitan Health services such as the Pecan Valley Clinic, the SE Military Drive WIC facility and city programs (e.g.. maternity program).



Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: SA Metropolitan Health District (Health Education and Promotion staff, Public Information Officer and Nursing Division)

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, schools, churches

Funding sources: State and Federal grants, private foundations

SE Military Drive WIC facility.

9.2.2 Research the need for more community clinics that are affiliated with local hospitals by integrating appropriate questions into community survey.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance, Hospitals

Partnerships: SA Metropolitan Health District

Funding sources: Hospital Systems

9.2.3 Develop and implement a parish nursing program at one of the Highlands churches. The program provides a nurse who will come to the church and perform health screenings such as blood pressure and cholesterol checks and will visit church members who are ill.

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: Highlands Alliance, churches

Partnerships: University of the Incarnate Word Nursing School, UT Health Science Center

Funding sources: foundations, Arch Diocese, churches, private donations

Goal 10: Library Services

Improve awareness, patronage, and access to the McCreless library while expanding its programs and resources.

Objective 10.1 Library Support

Increase community, business and political support for the library.

ACTION STEPS:

10.1.1 Publicize and expand Friends of McCreless Library.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Friends of McCreless Library

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, PTA's, youth organizations

Funding sources: in-kind donations, volunteers

10.1.2 Encourage private donations for the library from businesses and citizens.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Friends of McCreless Library

Partnerships: McCreless Library, Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, individuals

Funding sources: individuals, businesses

10.1.3 Encourage elected officials to advocate for the library.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Friends of McCreless Library

Partnerships: Highlands alliance and neighborhood associations, School districts, elected City, County and State officials

Funding sources: No cost



McCreless Library

Objective 10.2 Library Programs and Usage

Offer new and expanded services at McCreless Library to increase neighborhood patronage of the library and its services.

ACTION STEPS:

10.2.1 Create technology centers at each library that will include more computers and training classes in a variety of computer programs. Have computers available for neighborhood use such as writing the neighborhood newsletter, making neighborhood flyers, etc.



Computers at McCreless library

10.2.2 Have special publicity events at the library to increase patronage. Possibly tie in to regular youth event to promote learning.

10.2.3 Encourage more active older adult programs at the library, such as a grandparents day and a senior memoirs project.

Timeline: Long term (over 5 years)

Lead Partner: COSA Library Dept.

Partnerships: Friends of McCreless Library, Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, businesses, Alamo PC, AWDC

Funding sources: State/Federal funding, CDBG funds, United Way

Timeline: Mid (3 to 5 years)

Lead Partner: McCreless Library

Partnerships: Christian Youth Organization (CYO), youth serving agencies, SA Missions baseball, Palo Alto College, COSA Cultural Affairs Office, COSA Parks and Recreation Dept., City Council, YMCA, churches, school districts

Funding Sources: corporations, in-kind donations from businesses, individual donations, entry fees/donations at gate

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years)

Lead Partner: McCreless Library

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, CSS, Sister's Care, Southeast Community Outreach for Older People (SCOOP), churches

Funding sources: Private foundations, state/federal, volunteers, COSA Elderly Services, neighborhood-based senior-service centers

10.2.4 Use the library as a place where the public can obtain information on all types of local services. Create a marketing program that will promote the library as such a repository.



Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: Library Department

Partnerships: COSA Departments, volunteers, United Way

Funding sources: Public announcements on TV, radio and in newspaper, volunteers/donations, foundations, COSA

McCreless library interior.

10.2.5 Recruit community involvement in communicating their priorities to the library system. Have a Friends of McCreless Library representative make a presentation to each neighborhood association in District 3 and request support and a liaison from each association.

Timeline: immediate

Lead Partner: Friends of McCreless Library, Highlands Alliance

Partnerships: Neighborhood associations, churches, schools

Funding sources: volunteers

10.2.6 Begin a paperback book exchange and/or book loan program for hospitalized patients at SE Baptist Hospital.

Timeline: Short (1 to 2 years) and ongoing

Lead Partner: SE Baptist Hospital, Friends of McCreless Library

Partnerships: Highlands Alliance and neighborhood associations, Half-Price Bookstores, churches

Funding sources: SE Baptist, individual donations

